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## A RUSSIAN PROVINCE OF THE NORTH

avail, and notwithstanding my reiterated assertions that passports would be of no use up at the North Pole—by the way, they were more staggered at the idea of any place without police than at anything else I said—they persisted in their demand for them, adding, “It’s all right as long as you have a passport.” So I duly handed them a certificate that they might be allowed to pass without let or hindrance to the Pole, and so, without more ado, off they started.’

M. Engelhardt’s description of the Lapp is very happy; he likens them to the ‘gnome’ of fairy books when wearing their characteristic costume. They are becoming lost among other races, but the fairly well-to-do delight in their own special manner of life, ‘the freedom of the tundra, the rumbling of the forests . . . delicious fresh fish, whether trout, salmon, or grayling . . . being whirled along in our kereoshkas, harnessed to four strong full-grown bull-reindeer . . . to our homes, where fresh venison is roasting for us on the piled-up logs.’ Paul the cook and his museum of stuffed specimens is very prettily sketched in, as is the droll punishment of the gambling soldiers; it is just as well to know that there were mosquitoes in this arctic region, but that on the burning of some Solorieff smoking candles ‘they fled headlong from tent or room.’ The fact that the men are so much away at the fisheries causes the work at home to be left to the women, and led to a very amusing scene in the Petchora. ‘A peasant was trudging along the road, and, close behind, with a metal badge-of-office on her breast, a feeble-looking old woman. The old woman, in the performance of her duty as village constable, was duly conducting this great strong convict-peasant on his way to the gaol at Mezler. Learning that I was the Governor, one police-constable begged me to release her from the duty of escorting her prisoner further, ‘as you know he can just as well find his way for himself.’ This, in fact,

was the outcome of the interview. The prisoner hurried on by himself with his own warrant in hand. ‘And where’s the prisoner?’ he was asked. ‘I myself am he.’

We should like to speak of the journey to Novaia Zemlia, of the Birds’ Bazaar, the settlement of the Samoyedes, and of the marriage agency, which the Government were driven to institute and which met with partial success, but we must now refer our readers to the book itself.

### F UNAFUTI\* BY MRS. EDGEWORTH DAVID

THE burden of this most interesting book is an appreciation of the London Missionary Society. The ‘big boss’ in Funafuti is the ‘Missionali’; the Man-o’-war and Commissioner play only second fiddle. Professor David and his company went to this Atoll in order to study geology. He took boring apparatus and succeeded in getting down 557 feet, but we see nothing of him in the book except as a butt for his good wife’s fun, and as a cause of anxiety to her. While the coral is being bored she determines not to be bored too, and her book is the result of her inquiries and experiences among the Funafutians. She spent three months on the island; it was merely the Professor’s vacation

\* London : John Murray. Price 12s.



NAINA AND SOLONAIMA.

(Murray)



MAIN STREET IN FUNAFUTI

(Murray)

trip. It is very difficult to summarise such a book as this, for the subjects of interest are so many and various. It might almost be taken as the story of Opateia, the sub-chief, who 'is barely middle-aged, tall, grave, strong, clean, brave, clever, pious, yet humble, and he wears a complete suit of white ducks on Sundays. Opataia is a model man, and is much thought of and respected by all who know him. He can spear or hook fish, row, climb a cocoanut tree, cultivate taro, make bonito hooks and sinnet, cook fish, make pu-leleti and lolo, and lasso a rat with any man on the island.' A description of his magnificent steering is given, and specimens of his pretty oratory are dotted about the book.

Or the book might be considered a eulogy on the cocoanut palm. 'It is a miraculous tree ; it supplies food, drink, cord, bait, thatch, mats, oil for lamps, anointing oil, firing, saucerpans, bottles, plates, spoons, brushes, and clothing.' Its uses permeate the book, and the food of the natives being to a large extent made up of cocoanuts will sound tempting to those who enjoy the contents of a pastry-cook's. Again, the hermit crabs might almost be considered the *raison d'être* of Mrs. David's work. 'Hermit crabs,' she says, 'have not imbibed the new morality of Funafuti, for they are shameless cannibals and impudent thieves.'

'I had collected a rather nice set of shells from

the lagoon reef to take home to my children. These shells were left in a basket . . . Soon I saw a number of hermit crabs undressing themselves, backing into or running off with my pretty whole shells, leaving me their discarded, battered shelters behind them.' Mrs. David, having made a dash, recovered about half her shells and covered them with muslin. 'Very soon the hermits returned, and after a brief survey of the situation deliberately set to work to tear the muslin . . . And the crabs walked off triumphantly with the rest of my shells. I did not interfere this time.' 'I used to get the creeps at their projecting eyes, long legs, and unsteady gait, and when an extra large one came and fixed me with a goggly stare, I could not repress a shudder.'

Mrs. David was plentifully supplied with adopted relatives, and the account of her relations towards them is very charming. She had to use all her medical skill upon them, and her chief hope is that a medical missionary may be sent to the island.

The natives, as is not generally understood, delight in pictures. Their songs are a marvellous mixture of Bible passages, geographical and general present day information.

By the publisher's courtesy we are able to reproduce two of the illustrations from Mrs. David's book.